

Illinois. University

The Illini Union

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“The aim was to erect a building which would be not only a distinguished social center, open to all students, faculty, and alumni, but also to inspire those who use it with the best traditions of our early American way of life.”

—ARTHUR CUTTS WILLARD,
President, University of Illinois

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At the beginning of his administration, President Arthur Cutts Willard gave his attention to the movement for an Illini Union building, mindful of its potential value in the personal education of the student.

He knew that the Union would help cement great friendships—between men and women, students and faculty, people of various ages, races, and creeds. Friendship assumes nobility when it is built on something vital—mutual interests in intellectual ideals, common pursuits, the stimulus of vivid personalities upon one another.

Already we know that, in the associations formed in this building, students are hammering out their political, social and religious faiths, their personal and moral convictions. Of such contacts is real leadership born.



LOBBY ENTRANCE

*Come in the evening, or come in the morning;
Come when you're looked for, or come without warning.*

—THOMAS OSBORNE DAVIS

For the first time in its history, the University of Illinois has a “front door,” a place to greet visitors, a real social center helping to bring together students, faculty, and visiting alumni. It is a meeting place for many statewide organizations, for national, social, and scientific groups. As might be expected, the greater part of its use is by those on the campus daily. But thousands of alumni spend time in its lounges or dining rooms. On the second floor are the Faculty-Alumni Lounge as well as the offices of the Alumni Association, the Alumni Records, and the University of Illinois Foundation.



MAIN LOUNGE—FIRST FLOOR

*Welcome ever smiles
And farewell goes out sighing.*

—SHAKESPEARE

The spacious, home-like Main Lounge greets the visitor entering the building from historic Green Street. The Main Lounge opens to the south on a stone terrace facing the original quadrangle, and is, indeed, the campus center.

Illinois, one of the last great universities to erect a Union, had the advantage of studying many other buildings of this kind. The result is that space is put to the most practical use—principally by students. The social director helps plan a broad program of student and faculty events. Con-



GENERAL LOUNGE—SECOND FLOOR

*Loveliness
Needs not the foreign aid of ornament,
But is when unadorn'd, adorn'd the most.*

—JAMES THOMSON

ference rooms on the second floor are busy most of the time. Musical programs, provided by a deep-toned phonograph and a large record library, the gift of the Carnegie Corporation, are given three times daily in the second floor General Lounge, which was furnished by recent classes. The Game Room and Bowling Alleys are in constant use. The Illini Union Bookstore was intended for the new building but later it was thought more convenient to have it in another location nearby. Students share in its earnings.



PINE LOUNGE

*Is not true leisure
One with true toil?*

—JOHN WRIGHT

The sturdy, masculine Pine Lounge is utterly home-like, from its wide fireplace with a U. of I. emblem carved over it, to the window seats which look out over the terrace, the broad front campus near the Law Building, or down the elm-arched Broad Walk.

Almost all the rooms in the Union Building have massive fireplaces—with closets for wood close at hand. Student-faculty coffee hours are held each week. The Pine Lounge and others are used by thousands of guests every month.



WEDGWOOD LOUNGE

Hospitality sitting with Gladness.

—LONGFELLOW

The Wedgwood Lounge, in the same wing, with its delicate white carvings and blue walls, appeals particularly to feminine taste. It was patterned after the Supper Room in the Governor's Palace, at Williamsburg, Virginia.

There are many union buildings, but there is only one which has the warm, cordial atmosphere of the Illini Union. In developing this residential character on a scale large enough for a building to be used by more than 12,500 students, the architects accomplished something entirely unique.



THE COMMONS



THE TAVERN



THIRD FLOOR DINING ROOM

Strive mightily, but eat and drink as friends.

—SHAKESPEARE

Whether one goes to the bright, modern-as-the-future Commons, the early-American Tavern with its stone walls and heavy-beamed ceiling, or to the richly-decorated Colonial Room, he finds the Illini Union keeping its promise of serving students and others wholesome, well-prepared food at low prices.

From the cafeteria lines, on the lower level, one goes either to the Commons or to the Tavern. The cafeteria serves three meals daily, including Sunday. The Tavern is open all day and until 11 p.m. It serves fountain drinks, sandwiches, and other light foods. Designed to resemble an old



COLONIAL ROOM

To sweet repast and calm repose.

—GRAY

New England public eating room, it has several alcoves each of which suggests a different period in early American life.

On the third floor are private dining rooms which, by means of folding doors and sliding panels, can be used as one room accommodating approximately 300 or can be made into a series of smaller ones.

The Colonial Room, on the first floor, has table d'hôte service for lunch and dinner. It is bright with Chippendale furniture and green, Chinese wallpaper suggesting the fashions brought back to America by the sea-faring colonials.



BROWSING ROOM

To unpathed waters, undreamed shores.

—SHAKESPEARE

The Browsing Room has proved to be one of the most popular in the Union Building. It offers students and others a place to wander undisturbed among 1500 bright, colorful books. The collection contains new books, illustrated editions of old favorites, short stories, plays and poetry, personal histories, tall tales and mystery stories, sketches and essays, and humor; books of adventure, of romance, of college life; books about art and music, exploring and travel, science, and man the builder. About the walls are niches for busts of great authors.



ONE OF THE STAIRCASES

Architecture is frozen music.

JOHN SULLIVAN DWIGHT

Fundamentally, the Illini Union is in every way a part of Illinois. Its kiln-run, pleasant, red brick were made within the borders of the state. Its design is American Georgian, particularly effective on a broad, flat countryside. It even has two things of cherished memory from old University Hall in its cupola—the Class of '78 clock and the old chapel bell.

Although in these respects it is native, much of its design is patterned after the historic buildings at Williamsburg, Virginia, which have been restored to



LOOKING TOWARD THE PINE LOUNGE

Portals that lead to an enchanted land . . .

—THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

their original magnificence. Thus the most dignified and yet informal atmosphere of the best early-American homes lives again here in east-central Illinois.

Dean Rexford Newcomb, of the College of Fine and Applied Arts in the University, says, "When the excellence of the Illini Union's interior and exterior is considered, the building appears to be quite the finest structure upon the Illinois campus. As the years go by, it is bound to have a marked influence upon the taste of the thousands of students who will come in contact with it."



GRAND BALLROOM

*And the best of all ways
To lengthen our days
Is to steal a few hours from the night, my dear.*

—THOMAS MOORE

Even as they pass the entrance, guests usually ask, “May we see the ballroom?” With its tall, colonial windows softened by heavy, crimson draperies, its colorful chandeliers, and dark, highly-polished Fontainebleau floors, it is one of the most magnificent parts of the building.

Used for supervised dances, it is also an ideal place for banquets and for large meetings of every kind. If they do not interfere with student use of the building, statewide organizations may use the room. This and most of the other rooms are air-conditioned. All food-service areas are treated acoustically.



THE TERRACE

For more than thirty years, University of Illinois students, faculty, and alumni have talked of a union building. In 1909, members of the Class of '09 started raising funds for that purpose. When the University of Illinois Foundation was organized, in 1935, one of its purposes was to arrange for such a building. The University obtained a grant of \$524,820 from the Public Works Administration and a loan of \$656,000 from the Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company for the building itself. The loan is being paid through an addition to student fees. Alumni contributed for equipment and furnishings.

Thousands of Illini who gave their thought, effort, and money to make possible the completion of this project, have the gratitude of those who enlisted their aid, and the thanks of all those who use the Union in this and future years.

PLANNERS OF THE BUILDING

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¹When plans for the building were completed.

CHARLES S. HAVENS, Director of the Physical Plant

ERNEST L. STOFFER, University Architect

HOWARD L. CHENEY, Consulting Architect

JOHN C. LEAVELL, Associate Architect

ERNST C. VON AMMON, Interior Decorator

AMBROSE CRAMER, Interior Decorator

SAMUEL L. LEWIS, Designer of Mechanical Services

ROBERT C. MAXWELL, Structural Engineer

ENGLISH BROTHERS, General Contractors

VERNON L. KRETSCHMER, Manager of the Building

IRENE D. PIERSON, Social Director

KATHARINE M. ANSLEY, Manager of Food Services

ERWIN J. SCHREIBER, Manager, Illini Union Book Store

JOHN T. HARMAN, Bowling Alley Manager

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